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UNCLAS ROME 001526

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDING SUBJECT TAGS)
SENSITIVE

NEA/NGA TO NATE JENSEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [IT](#)

SUBJECT: TFI201: CHALDEAN PRELATE WANTS TO CELEBRATE PALM
SUNDAY MASS IN BASRA

REF: A. PHONE CONVERSATION: MANSOUR - NEA/NGA NATE

JENSEN APR 9

[1](#)B. EMAIL: BASS - EUR/WE MARA TEKACH-BALL APR 9

[1](#)1. (SBU) MSGR. PHILIP NAJIM, THE SENIOR REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CHALDEAN CHURCH IN ITALY AND THE PROCURATOR OF THE CHALDEAN PATRIARCHATE OF BABYLON TO THE HOLY SEE, ASKED TO MEET WITH RELIGIOUS MINORITIES OFFICER AND NEA WATCHER APRIL 9. MSGR. NAJIM THANKED THE USG FOR "OVERTHROWING SADDAM," AND EXPRESSED GENERAL CONCERNS ABOUT THE STATE OF THE CHALDEAN CHURCH IN IRAQ AND SPECIFIC CONCERNS ABOUT POTENTIAL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHRISTIANS IN IRAQ ESPECIALLY FROM THE SHIITES (UNDER-REPRESENTED IN A SADDAM GOVERNMENT THAT PROTECTED THE CHRISTIANS IN IRAQ) IN A POST-SADDAM IRAQ.

[1](#)2. (SBU) MSGR. NAJIM WAS PARTICULARLY GRATEFUL TO THE BRITISH FORCES THAT WERE PROTECTING THE CHALDEAN CHURCH IN BASRA. HE (A BRITISH CITIZEN TRAVELING ON A BRITISH PASSPORT) SAID HE HOPED TO TRAVEL TO BASRA (THROUGH KUWAIT AND UMM KASR) APRIL 11 TO BRING ASSISTANCE AND MONEY TO THE BISHOP OF THE CHALDEANS IN BASRA. HE WAS PLANNING ON CELEBRATING PALM SUNDAY MASS APRIL 13 IN THE CHALDEAN CHURCH IN BASRA. ITALIAN RAI TELEVISION WAS GOING TO FILM THE MASS SERVICE AND AIR IT IN ITALY ON GOOD FRIDAY ALONG WITH THE HOLY FATHER'S CELEBRATION.

[1](#)3. (SBU) MSGR. NAJIM SAID HE WAS HOPING TO GO TO BAGHDAD APRIL 12 TO MEET THE TWO SENIOR CHALDEAN BISHOPS (CURRENTLY LEADING THE CHALDEAN CHURCH IN IRAQ SINCE THE PATRIARCH'S HEALTH WAS FAILING) NOW STAYING IN THE NUNCIATURE IN BAGHDAD. HE ASKED IF THE US MILITARY COULD PROVIDE A SAFE CONDUCT FOR HIM FROM BASRA TO BAGHDAD AND BACK APRIL 12. EMBASSY OFFICERS PROMISED TO CHECK WITH THE DEPARTMENT BUT ADVISED MSGR. NAJIM THE US MILITARY WAS UNLIKELY TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE A SAFE CONDUCT FOR HIM GIVEN THE UNSTABLE SITUATION IN THE REGION.

[1](#)4. (U) THE UK EMBASSY IN ROME IS AWARE OF AND WORKING ON THIS POTENTIAL VISIT TO BASRA.

[1](#)5. (U) THIS CABLE WAS CLEARED BY EMBASSY VATICAN.

[1](#)6. (U) MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.
SEMBLER

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